

ST. CROIX HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



The Holmes Cottage



The Holmestead



Whitlock's Mill Lighthouse

Editor: Lura Jackson

Volume 28, Issue #2

Calais, Maine

November 2017

Last Birth in Calais Marks End of Era

It is with a somewhat heavy heart that this issue begins. The obstetrics unit of Calais Regional Hospital has officially closed after announcing it would do so in May, and the last baby has been born there. The aging population of the St. Croix Valley can no longer support an obstetrics unit, and so, facing constant losses, the department has closed. Some who are reading this will have "Calais, Maine" on their birth certificates, but there will not be a future generation that does.

The hospital has been a fixture in Calais since it opened a century ago under the guidance of the intrepid Dr. Walter Miner. Times have changed since Dr. Miner opened the hospital however. While there was once a time that so many babies were being born in the St. Croix Valley (following the Second World War) that it was necessary to open an annex to house the maternity ward, such is clearly no longer the case.

With that said, there are reasons to be optimistic about some of the recent changes happening locally. A partnership has been made to restore both the McAllister building and the Sarsaparilla building. The effort to do so will include the preservation of as much original interior and exterior materials as possible. The news is timely as the roof and outer wall of the Sarsaparilla building were facing catastrophic collapse by multiple accounts.



A young boy walks past the building that would become the Calais hospital in its original location on Church Street.

The restoration of the two buildings is expected to take approximately two years, although work on each of them has already begun. Once complete, the McAllister building will house a retail space downstairs and apartments or office space upstairs, while the Sarsaparilla building will have its three original downstairs retail spaces restored along with its numerous upper apartments.

To end on another note entirely, the city is approaching the possibility of offering fiber optic internet to its residents and businesses, a move that will certainly attract telecommuters and businesses. Will such an addition eventually lead to the kind of growth that would herald the opening of a new obstetrics unit at the hospital? It may be overly optimistic to hope so, but, at the very least, it represents the city's effort to make itself an attractive and viable place to live.

Cemetery Tour 2017 Photos



Past Meetings and Events

As usual, it's been a busy summer for the St. Croix Historical Society. This season, we helped the hospital celebrate its 100th year anniversary with a healthcare-themed cemetery tour, had a special guest presenter come all the way up from Texas to share in how our communities are connected, and we enjoyed learning about Benedict Arnold and his days as a fugitive here in Passamaquoddy Bay.

April 3rd: The April meeting focused on the exploits of Benedict Arnold, beginning with his earliest years in the military, continuing through to his famed “March through Maine”, detailing his attempted betrayal of America through the paid surrender of West Point to the British, and concluding with his time as a smuggler on Campobello Island. Read more about the topic on our website at <http://stcroixhistorical.com/?p=1423>.

May 1st: In May, society members Al Churchill, Fred Becker, Jerry LaPointe and myself (Lura Jackson) each took a turn presenting on individuals that served in the Civil War. Fred presented the story of Frank Holmes, who, at 19, died in the infamous battle at Fredericksburg in Virginia. Al shared the story of Martin Cone, who survived the attempt to take Port Hudson on the Mississippi River from the Confederates and later opened Cone’s Livery Stables on Main Street. Jerry read from a letter written by Frank E. Aylward, who ventured from Calais for many years before returning to it in 1908 and marveled at all the changes. I had the honor of speaking on Isabella Fogg, a nurse that provided diligent care to the soldiers on the frontlines, and who would later be the only woman given a federal stipend for her role in the war.

June 5th: Our June presentation featured the recorded memories of legendary local raconteur and postman, Sammy Saunders. Al paired the audio recordings of Sammy (originally taken in the 1980s) with appropriate slides. Also shared was a recorded interview with Sammy and Frank Fenderson. The recording of just Sammy speaking was turned into a digital slideshow that everyone can now see, available at <https://youtu.be/DoTu9W5W5Wo>.

June 16th: The society enjoyed a special presentation in mid-June from a visiting Texas professor. James Valentino has conducted significant research on the influx of immigrants from the Calais area to the Galveston, Texas area in the early to mid-1800s – particularly as it pertains to Lucy Parker Shaw. Valentino’s research was prompted by his discovery of about 30 letters written between Lucy and her mother. He has written a book on the subject titled *From Maine to Galveston, Republic of Texas*. To learn more about Valentino and his book, visit <https://www.jamesvalentinobooks.com>.

July 9th: In July, the society had its customary annual picnic at the Stone House where former president Brand Livingstone resided. There were approximately forty members and their guests in attendance for what proved to be an exceptionally beautiful and delightful day.

August 13th: During August, all of the society’s efforts were focused on performing the ever-popular Cemetery Tour. The tour was well-attended, as usual. This year’s tour focused on the history of healthcare in the region and included such famed individuals as Dr. Job Holmes and Dr. Walter Miner. Most of the



Professor James Valentino of Texas provided special insight on how the culture of New England influenced the development of Texas in June.

performances were recorded. This year, two video recording devices and an audio recording device was used. Videos of the tour will be forthcoming as your faithful digital technologist works to piece them together.

September 4th: In September, Jerry LaPointe shared the watercolors of Mary Caroline Pike Robbins, a talented woman who was a national journalist writing for *The Atlantic* as well as a watercolor artist. Her paintings had been kept in a box in the library up to this point (other than the occasional showing), so it was a real treat to break them out into the open and share them with everyone. A digital photograph was taken of every painting and our aim is to create an online gallery for all to enjoy. We will keep you posted on our progress (or, stay tuned to the Facebook page for a more immediate update).

October 2nd: Our most recent meeting featured the story of the schooner *Julia Warr*'s disappearance in 1897. The ship was made locally and crewed by five local sailors, including Captain George D. Warr of St. Stephen. When it disappeared, the craft was carrying a load of lumber from Murchie's lumber yard.

Donations and contributions since our last newsletter

The society is the happy recipient of two photographs from Sally Doten, one of bank corner and one of the movie operators' club. We also received a band uniform in excellent condition from the Woodland Band; it once belonged to Gus Gillis. It's a tight fit but Al can do it. Brand Livingstone donated a copy of David McCullough's, *The American Spirit*. Gracie Meader's sister, Marjorie, donated boxes of books from Gracie. The society received a \$100 donation from Karen Rosenberg and Thomas Rocek in Delaware in honor of their recently deceased colleague, Svend Holsoe. Svend was the associate professor emeritus of anthropology at the University of Delaware.

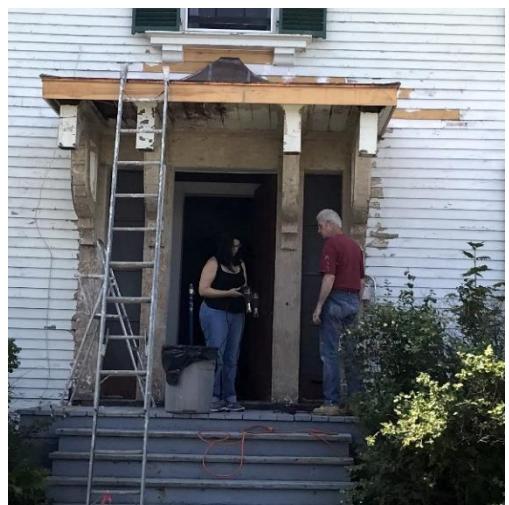
Upcoming Meetings and Events

The next meeting of the SCHS will take place at the Holmestead on November 6th. In December, we will be having a holiday party per our custom. The party will take place on December 8th (check this date??).

The Evolving Story of the Holmestead Porch

Once upon a time, the porch of the Holmestead was in dire need of repair. The roof was rotted and leaking, the porch was separating from the house, and one of the finials had fallen out. The entryway to the old home was far from inviting!

One day, a group of friends decided it was time to restore the porch, but they didn't think they could afford it on their own. A gift from the Maine Community Foundation Belvedere Fund for almost \$10,000 seemed like enough to do the trick! The friends looked everywhere for someone to fix the roof, and thought they found a person that could do it locally. Unfortunately, that person couldn't come through, and the search continued. Finally, a business located in the far-away land of Bangor was found, and they told the friends that the roof could be fixed (albeit at a higher price than the local fellow



Patrick Mealey and Joyce Jackson set about restoring the Holmestead porch.

quoted). Bangor Roofing was thus contracted to fix the roof, a task accomplished by covering it in shiny copper metal.

The condition of the roof was worse than originally thought and the Bangor contractors wound up needing to rebuild the frame around it. The additional work produced additional expense, and the friends expressed their frustration quietly amongst themselves. When the bill was presented, the friends were shocked at how much more it was - luckily, one of the friends was a lawyer and he negotiated the price to be lowered by \$1,000.



Roof repaired and painted, finials removed for finishing, door painted – the porch is coming along!

With the roof repaired, the friends recruited Patrick Mealey and Joyce Jackson, from Fine artist Made, who had previously restored parts of the Holmestead and the Holmes Cottage to grand effect. The pair were so enthralled by the project that they offered to restore it well beyond the original goals!

Jackson and Mealey quickly set about stripping the porch, removing the railing, and removing all the finials. The original color of the door was identified, along with the original layout of the porch [note, if you happen to have any old photos of the original porch, please send them to us!]. Even the original doorbell system was uncovered!

While some of the work has already been accomplished, the rest will take place next year. Jackson and Mealey will be restoring the porch to its original appearance, making the Holmestead even more true to its 1850 incarnation.

The Story of John Gardner, Boat Builder (pt. 2)

Picking up where our last issue left off, here is part two of the life of boat builder John Gardner, written by former SCHS President Brand Livingstone.

John's education after graduating from Calais Academy was a constant movement to become a teacher, as were many of his aunts. He sawed and split and piled four cords of hackmatack wood to buy pants so he could play football while at Calais Academy. Upon graduating, he went to Washington State Normal School in Machias where he edited the school magazine and was president of the student body.

After graduating with his degree to teach in Maine, he went summers to Columbia University in New York and received his BS in education and his masters in 1932, just in time to greet the jobless years of the Great Depression.

John's first serious boat building came when a summer job at Pine Island Camp in Belgrade Lakes, Maine put him in charge of supervising and building model boats and yachts and sailing them. He also built several full-sized boats.

The times were difficult for finding permanent work so he worked around his home base as a lumberman, contracting to peel pulpwood. One summer he peeled 100 cords of pulpwood that were delivered to the Woodland Paper Mill.

World War II commenced and he found work at several locations, including at Graves' yard in Marblehead, Mass. There he was a lead builder while building 70 Coast Guard wooden picket boats. He then worked at Reed's in Winthrop where he did all assembly-line construction, which proved to be a very different kind of building experience. Several years of this work convinced him to drop teaching and follow his many intellectual interests - especially writing. He finally found work at Mystic Seaport Museum, in Mystic, Connecticut, in 1969. He began there measuring boats and taking off their lines to preserve them for their history. He was interested in boats and their shape and drawing and writing about them.

Earlier, after many different boat yard experiences making boats for the government, boats for commercial work, and pleasure yachts, his intellectual interests were found in writing and personal association with museums and people like Howard Chapelle, a famous researcher and writer in the field of boating during the 1930's. All of this built the foundation for his later work. At this time, he started writing about boats for publications.

He wrote his first article for the Maine Coast Fisherman in 1951 and a continuous number of articles for many other nautical magazines. All the while his other interests such as Freudian psychology, atomic energy, ecology, organic gardening and others resulted in study and writing – a very balanced and curiously broad set of interests.

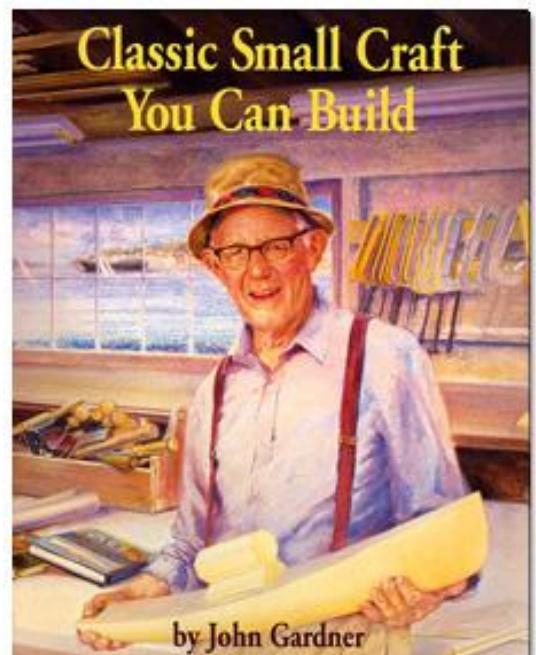
He researched obscure literature in the Widner Library at Harvard College after getting special entry through a friend. He spent hours in the Boston Athenaeum, the Hart Nautical Library and the Boston Medical Library. Early on in his career he did a series of articles on the Whitehall boat, which marked the beginning of the Whitehall revival (this is the rowing boat recently made at the construction program at the Boat School in Eastport.)

When John went to Mystic in 1969 there was no small craft program at all. He found a small space and started to build a program and a small boat. Around this time, he also traveled around New England picking up tools to fill out the collection at the Museum. He started the idea that Mystic should have a small craft meet at the Museum and it was started in 1970, continuing to this day. He also started a construction program at Mystic Seaport that continues each year making small boats, and building skills and character.

"As you can see, I have concentrated on small craft all of my life - unlike Howard Chappell, for example, who studied the larger boats and ships as well - perhaps because that was what I was interested in as a boy, and in a certain way I am reliving my boyhood. I have always stressed practical experience in addition to theoretical study, perhaps because my father placed a high value on manual skills with woodworking tools.

"Sure, I could have turned my efforts to recording the lines and details of larger vessels and luxury yachts, but my deeper interests lay with smaller, simpler craft of my boyhood on the St. Croix River."

I never found that John came back to Calais to remake his boyhood connections and memories but he would have seen much change. The village of Bog Brook is no longer in town references; the Church,



John Gardner, as seen on the cover of one of his books. He is in the Mystic Seaport boatshop he founded.

cemetery, school, and store are all gone and Bog Brook is now a bedroom for Calais and is populated with many people yet. I hope that the reader enjoys reading about this Calais man of great physical talent and mental skills that developed from this rural place. Perhaps it will give the reader more encouragement to study obscure history of many of those who made a difference in our lives.

Archibald Rogers: His Life and Death in the St. Croix Valley (pt. 1)

We are pleased to share this special segment from guest writer Dorothy Rogers. Dorothy came across the story of her relative, Archibald, while researching her own genealogy. Archibald apparently had a violent streak and would wind up killing a man with whom he was arguing. From her bio: Dorothy Rogers is a Maine native whose family recently discovered they have roots in the St. Croix Valley. Her sister Joyce (Rogers) Sanborn is the real genealogist in the family, but Dorothy joins in to help her whenever she can. They are descendants of Robert Rogers (ca. 1774-1865) and his wife Fanny (1795-1860), both of Ireland, who raised their children in St. Mary's Parish, NB, then migrated to Calais in the 1850s. Dorothy now lives in northern New Jersey where she teaches at a local state university.

When you have a common last name like Rogers, it's not unusual to find yourself going on a wild goose chase. Still, some wild goose chases are pretty darned interesting, as is the case with Archibald Rogers. His life story is so compelling, I couldn't help but investigate it. And though I'm still not sure if he's in my family line, I'm happy to share it here with fellow local history enthusiasts.

The life of Archibald Rogers (ca. 1845-1887) began and ended in the St. Croix Valley. In the years in between, Archibald sailed the seas, saw the world, and quite likely felt like he'd been to hell and back. Let me explain.

Archibald was born in Calais, Maine, the son of Irish immigrants, Hugh (born ca. 1815) and Hannah (born ca. 1812) Rogers or Rodgers (the spelling varied). His family was in crisis when he was young. The 1850 census in Calais indicates that Hugh was blind and that he and his wife were paupers. Their two oldest daughters, Margaret and Mary, were pre-teens living in other households at the time.

There are no records of Archibald or his family in Maine or New Brunswick in the 1860s, but in the 1870s documents indicate that he was a sailor, serving on vessels to England, Ireland, and Panama.

Archibald is reported to have worked on "De Lesseppe's Canal," better known to us as the Suez Canal, a massive project that began in 1859. It is unclear exactly when he was engaged in this work - whether as a young adult or in middle age. Though it was fairly common at this time for working class boys to begin careers in a trade or to join the military in their early teens, it is unlikely that Archibald joined the labor force at Suez in the earliest phases of the project. In the first years of canal construction, a million or more local Egyptian workers toiled under slave-like conditions to dig, haul, and relocate soil and stone using only



Construction on the Suez Canal began in 1859 and continued until 1869.

Archibald reportedly assisted in some capacity in the construction.

hand-held tools, muscle, and beasts of burden. After a few years, however, England was prompted by a mix of humanitarian concern and practical necessity to employ skilled laborers using steam-powered machines to complete the project. Much of the workforce was brought in from Britain and North America at this stage, and the local Egyptian workers dismissed.

Archibald was likely to have joined the project at this time, when he was about 20 years old. If he worked at the canal toward the end of his life — whether as a returning employee or a new hire — he'd have been involved, not in construction, but in maintenance and/or day-to-day operations. Either way, for a man who had a taste for adventure and wanted to see the world, work at the Suez Canal would have been an amazing opportunity.

But one afternoon in April 1875, Archibald's life took a terribly bad turn. He was spending time with friends at Woodworth's Tavern on Sheffield Street in St. John when an argument broke out. Tempers flared, and the proprietor ordered the combatants — Archibald and another mariner named Linus Seely — to leave. Friends and acquaintances joined them as the confrontation left the confines of the tavern and continued to escalate. Reportedly, Seely drew a knife, and Archibald drew a gun. He fired - once, twice, perhaps (reports varied) - promptly ending Seely's life.

[To be continued in the next issue.]

Officer News

We have some special news to share with you this issue related to our officers. First and foremost, former SHCS President Brand Livingstone has experienced a series of health issues and he is no longer able to stay at the Stone House on his own. If you would like to contact Brand, please send mail to: C.B. Livingstone, Morrison Nursing Home Room 104A, 6 Terrace St., Whitefield, NH, 03598.

Secondly, we are pleased to share that current President Al Churchill has successfully retired from his vocation as a public defender after 40 years. Though he retired at the end of July, Al has already driven to Alaska and back and completed substantial reorganization at the Holmestead office.

I have some news to share on my own behalf – in August I officially took over the role of editor for *The Calais Advertiser*. It feels strangely comfortable and I've wondered if it has to do with one of the earlier editors for the paper being John Jackson (which is the name of my husband). Either way, I am honored to continue to serve the community and the society in this capacity, even if it does require a substantial amount of time and energy!



A younger Brand Livingstone examines the fire sack of Cyrus Hamlin in the Holmes Cottage.

editor of this newsletter. Al and Jerry offer assurances that they are up to the task, and I have a feeling they will be more timely with the issues than I have been. I will continue to contribute portions related to our online presence and other articles when possible.

On that note, I have decided to relinquish my role as

Lastly, in the interest of fueling the expanding bureaucracy, we have created a new non-voting officer position. Shane DelMonaco will be serving the society as Assistant Digital Technologist, a role for which he has proven his capacity with the Cemetery Tour website he recently completed. While no definitive projects have been outlined yet for the future, Shane has been made an administrator of the society's Facebook page.

Connecting with the Society Online

The SCHS Facebook page (www.facebook.com/Stcroixhs) has grown again in the number of fans, increasing from 1,854 in the last issue to 2,089. Our most popular post was a collection of 55 photographs from the 1976 bicentennial celebration in Calais. The photographs accrued almost 27,000 views, or about 500 views for each photograph.

Contact the SCHS:

Do you have questions about local history, suggestions for events or presentations, or comments or concerns regarding the newsletter? Let us know!

President: Al Churchill jaclaw1@gmail.com

Vice President and Assistant Editor: Jerry LaPointe lapointe04619@gmail.com

Treasurer: John Wood

Digital Technologist and Secretary: Lura Jackson luraejackson@gmail.com

Assistant Digital Technologist: Shane DelMonaco

New and Renewing Members Since Last Newsletter

Ruth Ahrens	Constance Croman	International Motel	Joan Perry
Richard Auletta	Bill/Jane DelMonaco	Mike Johnson	Leonard Picotte
Fred Becker	Nick/Pam DelMonaco	Dyer/Edith Johnston	Kerry/Eleanor Pinette
David/Patsy Beckett	Irene DelMonaco	Jim/Jean Kelley	Richard Preston
Allen/Pam Beckett	Dayton Dineen	Michael Kelly	Dorothy Rogers
Richard/Kathy Berry	Paul Donahue	James Knight	Ken Ross
Peter/Gail Berry	John/Marie Dudley	Teresa MacLean	Carl/Heather Ross
Eunice Bothwick	Alan/Candace Dwelley	Paula McLain	Catherine Scullin
Earl/Ann Boyd	Jack Emack	Anne Miles	Brenda Shope
Tom/Alison Brennan	Susan Esposito	Bruce/Judy Mills	David/Ann Simmons
Lyn Mikel Brown	Betsey Fales	John/Lorraine Mitchell	Jack/Sally Smith
Michael Carmody	Ed/Vicki Farrell	Sally Nelligan	Susan Smythe
Ann/Ken Carter	Mike/Cathy Footer	Bill/Judy Nelson	St. Croix Island Site
Eleanor Clark	William/Gail Gould	Anne Nixon	Mark Tappan
Gloria Clark	Marjorie Hagen	Wilma Parks	Helen Taylor
Paul/Sue Crawford	Richard/Barb Hall	Patricia Peck	Helen Thomas

Jim/Judy Thompson	Mona Van Wart	John Wood
Judith Tompkins/William Howard	Sandra Whiteley	Paul Zebiak
Norma Van Devander	Ronald/Heidi Williams	

The Society is supported through membership dues and donations. If you haven't yet paid your 2017 dues, please remember to do so. A bright pink mark on your address label denotes unpaid dues for 2017. To make a donation via credit, debit, or Paypal, visit http://stcroixhistorical.com/?page_id=400 and click "Donate".

Financial Update

The checkbook balance is \$2,722.03. The savings account balance is \$1,577.46. The value of the 100 shares of Qualcomm stock has decreased to \$4,690.84.

GIFT SUGGESTIONS:

Available by mail from SCHS, prices include postage

Note Cards:

**4 Views of St. Croix Island (8 cards & envelopes total) –
Paintings by Mary Livingstone - \$15**

Books: Champlain's Journal - translated from French - \$8

"Washington County, Maine in the Civil War 1861-66" by Ken R Ross - \$22

"Beginnings" (A reprint of the 1875 "Annals of Calais" by Rev. Knowlton) - \$16

"Pork, Molasses, & Timber" by Eaton - \$14

Around Town by Rail - \$11

Nellie's Diary - \$29

The Way We Were 1908 - \$19

Keene on Red Beach - \$29

Calais Fair 1914 - \$14

Ned's Valley - \$29

The Valley Cookbook - \$14

Charlie's Civil War - \$24 Calais

Centennial - \$14

Picture Books:

- “In Days Past: Calais 1896” - 52 views - \$8**
- “In Days Past: St. Andrews 1896” - 30 views - \$8**
- “Old Friends” - 49 old area photos - \$6**
- “Scenes of St. Stephen, 1895” - \$9**
- “Scenes of Campobello, Eastport, & Lubec, 1895” - \$10**

Maps:

- Red Beach Birdseye view map, 11x17, laminated - \$15**
- Calais, St. Stephen, & Milltown Birdseye view map 1879, 11x17, laminated - \$15**
- Wharfs of Calais & St. Stephen map 1856, 11x17, laminated - \$15**

DVD:

- Calais First Town Meeting Reenactment - \$19**

Order at St. Croix Historical Society, P. O. Box 242, Calais, ME 04619

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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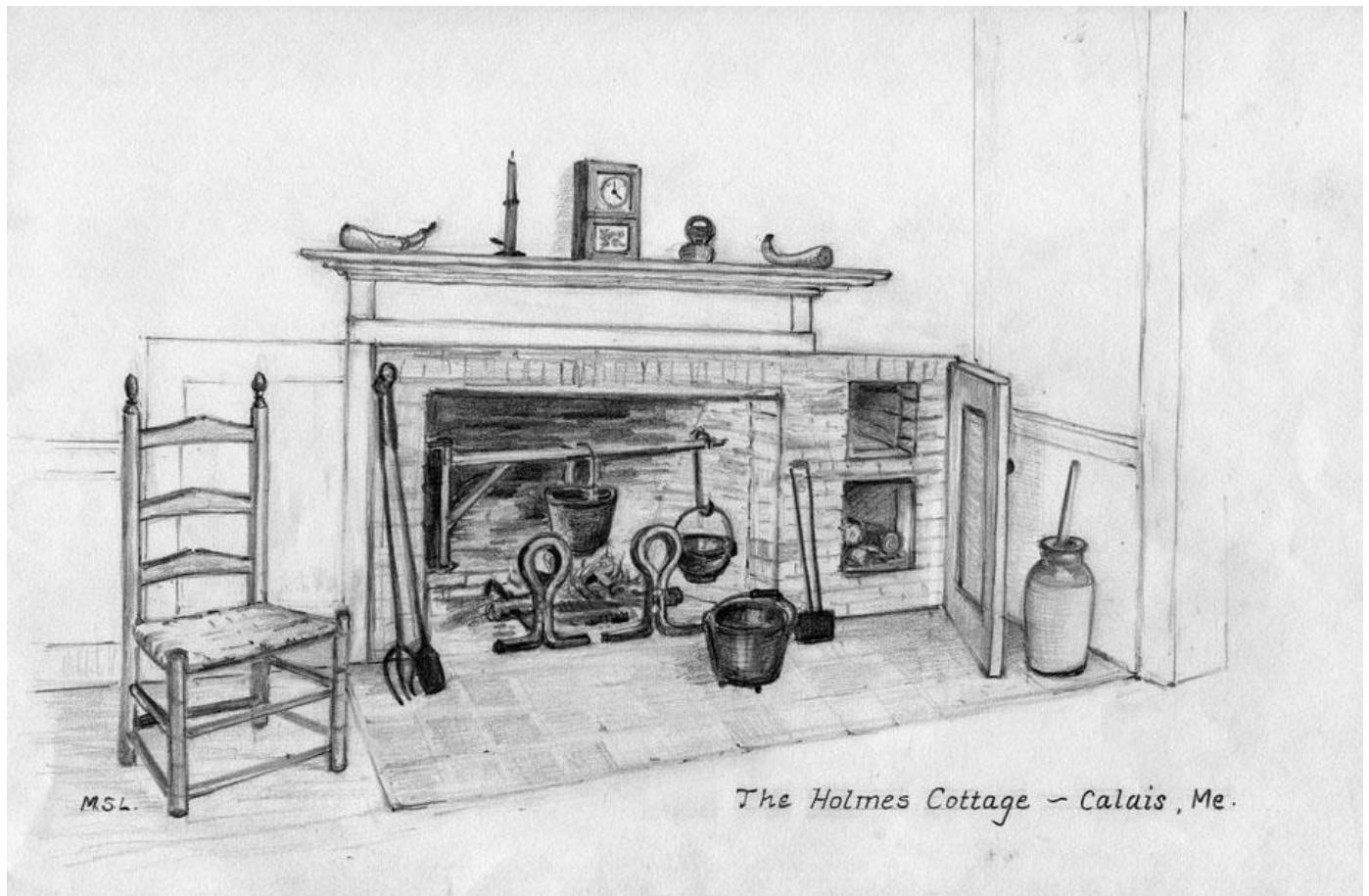
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Corp/Bus	\$60
Patron	\$150 (includes one free 3 hour rental of Holmestead meeting room)
Life	\$500

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